

Interview H0045: with Taring, Rinchen Drolma [tib. phreng ring, rin chen sgrol ma], (Unknown, 7 July 1982) : Part No. 1 of 8

Mrs. Taring was a famous Tibetan aristocrat married to Taring Dzasa. She discusses the events surrounding the murder of her father and brother and the role of Dasang Dramdül [tib. zla bzang dgra 'dul] in the 1911-13 period and his coming to the Tsarong family. The interviewee also discusses how she came to go to school in Indian and about the history of the Tsarong family during this period.

Q

I requested a detailed discussion relating to the [lord](#) and [miser](#) system and then the impact of social changes like the death of the Regent, the power struggles and conflicts etc., on the society. What was the impact of such changes, especially on the common people? A price hike usually accompanies such changes. How did it affect the common people and social standards? ... Please narrate such incidents. This is a very long question.

A

No, no - Gelek Rinpoche has specially come to Rajpur to be with us for a few days to have us share our experiences with him. A major change has swept across our country and hence it is important for us to promote and to preserve our culture and religion and this will help our government in the long run. We are not important, but when we organize and narrate our own experiences, it could be useful and informative. I wrote a book, "Daughter of Tibet." I realized that I was one of the eldest ladies among the refugees in India and many elder people were passing away. At the same time, our population in India is increasing steadily and a new generation is emerging in India. Besides, there are many people who were very young when they escaped from Tibet. If this generation does not have a proper understanding of our culture, our future is going to be difficult.

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I was not very elderly when I came to India, but now many years have rolled by and I am now much older. Hence I felt that writing a book based on my own life experiences would be beneficial for the younger generations to gain an understanding of our culture and traditions. It was my hope that the book would be useful to many others to help them understand our race and culture. There are many books on Tibetan culture, politics and religion written by Westerners, but I felt that a book based on the personal experiences of an elderly Tibetan lady would be more useful. After I had written the book, I worried about it - how useful it was going to be. I know of its contribution to our own society, but what was going to be the reaction of Westerners to my book? These were my worries in the beginning, but when the printed book came out, everybody liked it and found it interesting. In a review about the book it was mentioned that it has frankly and sincerely dealt with Tibetan culture covering a period of 50 years. Even the scholars found it to be an outspoken book. As such, everybody seemed to have liked it. About 10,000 copies were printed.

Q

Is it now the second edition?

A

It has been printed three or four times. It was printed two times in England and then in a German translation. Then there was a paperback edition in India. It is being printed now in French, and I have already given the permission to do so. Whatever I could think of, I tried to mention in my book - yet I am once again happy to tell you whatever I can. This may or may not be useful. If useful, it could be good for our society and so I shall tell you most gladly.

Q

Thank you, thank you.

A

I shall now tell you my personal story. You have patiently come up here for a detailed discussion with us. There may be frequent references to "I" like a child does.

Q

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Yes, please, there has to be "I."

A

I may tell you my personal story. I am a daughter of Tsarong. Tsarong was a mediocre [gerpa](#). Our family lineage can be traced back to Yuthok Yönten Gönbo [tib. g.yu thog yon tan mgon po].

Q

There were two Yuthok Yönten Gönbos. Was it the earlier or the latter?

A

Oh! Yes. It must be in the year 1750 during the reign of King Trisrong Detsen [tib. khri srong sde btsan].

Q

Please don't say 1750, but say 750.

A

Oh! Yes. It was not 1750 but 750. I am very sorry. Regarding our family lineage, the late Kungö Khyenrab Woser [tib. mkyen rab 'od zer] of the Tibetan Medical Astrological Institute used to say that. I remember very clearly.

Q

You mean the one who became very famous later on?

A

Oh yes. He was very fond of our elder brother who was a [trülku](#). He used to tell him that he was the holder of Yönten Gönbo's lineage. We were girls. Our elder brother had one or two sons. He use to tell them and remind them of the importance of their lineage. At Tsarong's estate we had a small medical monastery [tib. sman dgon]. When I was young, my mother renovated this monastery in memory of her late husband. Later she stayed here for a year. Usually she told us that we were from Yönten Gönbo's lineage. Among the religious items at the monastery, Yönten Gönbo's shirts and rosary and medicine bags, etc. were there.

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She usually told us that we were descendants of Yönten Gönbo. As daughters of the family, we did not know the importance of the lineage for us. But this was our family lineage. The bride of my late father was the daughter of the Yuthok family. The father of the present Yuthok [Sawangchemmo](#) and my mother were brother and sister.

Q

You mean Yuthok Tashi Thöndup [tib. bkra shis don grub]?

A

Yes, Yuthok Tashi Thöndrup. Yuthok Tashi Thöndup's father who was a shape. He and my mother were from the same parents. My father became the [depön](#) of tsang [tib. gtsang] in 1903. The British Military expedition arrived in 1904. In 1903, the British arrived via the Gampa area. He was then sent to Gampa along with a monk official to discuss this with the British with the view of delaying their further intrusion into Tibet. With the onset of winter, it was not possible for the British army to remain, so they returned. My father had discussions with them and when the British army returned, he came back to Lhasa. At the time, there was trouble with the shape. At that time the father of the present [Shatra](#) [tib. bshad sgra] was a shape. He became a Prime Minister [tib. blon chen] later.

Q

He was not Shatra's grandfather. He was his uncle. Was he the grandfather or the brother of the present Shatra's father? Wasn't the present [Shatra](#) the son of the Tshipön?

A

He was the son of the Tshipön. He was the grandson of Lönchen [Shatra](#). His father was a shape before he became Prime Minister. At that time the four shape were dismissed from their office. Horkhang, being less courageous, jumped into the river. Our late father was to take the place of [Shatra](#) as a shape. My elder sister used to say that an official order was received at Tsarong. As I was young, I did not have many conversations with him. Then he became a shape and once again the British Expedition came to Tibet.

Q

Was it the second expedition?

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A

Yes, it was the second one. It was in 1904. They came via Gyantse and finally arrived at Lhasa. I will tell you about it briefly. The Dalai Lama had to go down to the border area between Tibet and China. The shapes, at that time were our late father, Sechung [tib. gsar byung], Yuthok and one kalön lama. The British arrived in Lhasa and an agreement was signed with them. It was my father's time. This is so because I found a photograph from an English book. Otherwise such a photograph is very rare to find. When I was working at Mussoorie, we received many books as gifts. Tsomönling [tib. tshe smon gling] was the Regent then.

Q

Yes, he was.

A

My father was entrusted to look after the Kashag and also to assist the Regent.

Q

Was it the period when the 3 famous prime ministers, [Shatra](#), [Shölkhang](#) [tib. zhol khang] and [Changkyim](#) [tib. [chang](#) khyim], returned via the sea route?

A

I am sure you know about it.

Q

Yes, I do.

A

The Dalai Lama had gone to the border areas of China and Tibet and the Dalai Lama felt a little unhappy over the dismissal of [Shatra](#) and hence he was reinstated to the position of shape. [Shatra](#) then requested the Dalai Lama to reinstate his colleagues. In this way, they were all made shape. The Dalai Lama and the shape went to India. At Lhasa, my father was given the main responsibility to assist the Regent. The Chinese were residing

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in Lhasa and it seemed he had to have deep and cordial relations with them. My elder brother spoke excellent Chinese.

Q

Was he the Tsarong Gandrön?

A

His name was Samdrup Tsering [tib. bsam grub tshe ring] and our father's name was Wangchuk Gyalpo [tib. dbang phyug rgyal po]. So our father had to keep on good terms with the Chinese in a diplomatic way. Many people did not like this and there were many people saying that Tsarong was pro-Chinese. Then he received a letter from the Dalai Lama telling him to come to India, but the Regent asked him not to leave for India saying that he had so much to care for, like the protection and supervision of the Jentsal Phodrang palace [tib. spyang bsal pho brang], and [Norbulinga](#), etc. Hence he was asked by the Regent to get excused this time. Accordingly, he sought the Dalai Lama's permission to stay in Lhasa. As he was not able to go to India, some of our family friends told him that it would be good if he went to India.

At this time a revolution took place in China and consequently the Chinese who were residing in Lhasa were not receiving salaries, etc, so it was a good opportunity to throw them out of the country. Taking advantage of the turmoil in China, my father was planning to expel the Chinese and arrange for the return of the Dalai Lama, but there were many people who were instigating. Then he was told by his relatives to leave for India as conditions were not good, but he said, "If you cut my red neck you will get only white blood [tib. ske dmar po bcad na yang/ khrag dkar po] ." It seemed to be his [karma](#) to remain in Tibet. Although he was asked to come to India by the Dalai Lama, he was not able to go.

Q

Was he stopped by the Regent from going to India?

A

Yes, he was. Later, he was secretly told of the impending danger to his life, but he could not leave. The Tsarong family did a [senriy](#) divination to the the Shri Devi and it favored his leaving for India. Yet he could not leave. He had already started the expulsion process

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for the Chinese. At that time Tsarong Dasang Dramdül [tib. zla bzang dgra 'dul], who later became the shape, was sent to India to learn military training.

Q

That's true.

A

At that time Tsarong was around 22 or 23 years of age and was to be sent to St. Joseph's school. He had made the school uniforms. He had the wish to study, he told us, but he returned to Lhasa. It was rumored that he returned to Lhasa because he was one of the top-most men involved in the assassination of our late father. But it was not so. I checked into this matter. He had a great respect for our father and sought his advice. Our father was a very intelligent person - he could photograph, develop and print photographs. He was an expert on this. Similarly, he was good in handicrafts and had an excellent command of the Tibetan language. He was also an expert in playing musical instruments like the flute and he was unusually intelligent. He used to use the sewing machine also. He taught sewing to his daughters who later were good at tailoring. Dasang Dramdül used to come to our father to seek his advice and was also friendly with our late elder brother who was the [gandrön](#). Dasang Dramdül knew of the conspiracy to murder our father and he was there when the conspiracy was formed, but I dared not ask him about this. Later, I asked Bettyla, but she did not know of it clearly. The senior wife of my late elder brother - who was kind to me and was an educated lady - she told me this.

Q

Was she the mother of your brother Dümdüla [tib. bdud 'dul lags]?

A

No. She was not the mother of my brother Dümdüla. His wife was left behind in Tsarong. Tsarong [Sawangchemmo](#) first went as the bridegroom for the gandrön's wife. When the conspiracy was being hatched to murder the father and the son, Dasang Damdül spoke against it. The conspirators warned him that if he did not keep quiet he too would be a victim. They further warned him that if he paid too much attention to the Tsarong father and son, then he too would be killed.

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At that time Tibet was passing through a period of unrest. My mother and we were living at Tashi Khangsar [tib. bkra shis khang gsar] [near Drepung]. Our father lived in Lhasa and used to attend the Kashag at the Potala along with my brother. Our mother and the children had moved to Drepung. It was around the fourth month when our late father called us to [Nechung](#) [tib. gnas chung] where he had come for Nechung's monthly ritual.

I was about 2 years old while Anela was just a baby. My father completed the ritual of [Nechung](#). It was the first day of the fourth month of the Tibetan Calendar when my father went to the Kashag. At the Kashag the plotter to kill him was awaiting him. It was, I suppose, improper to hit him right away; they had to make an excuse, like finding a letter, etc., to bring him down from the shape's seat. He got down from his seat to help find the letter and then they made the assault on him. They dragged him down the Potala stairs and kicked him now and then. The late Trijang [tib. khri byang] Rinpoche was around 11 or 12 years old and witnessed this assault on my father. He told us that our father suffered a lot. Then conspirators took him in front of the [Shöl](#) office where he was shot dead. They did the worst possible to him. so he died there. [Khyungram](#) [tib. khyung ram] had come to invite our elder brother from the Kashag. [Khyungram](#) was amongst the conspirators. He was related to us to some extent. He said that he had a bad dream the night before. He had come to invite my brother. The people from Kongpo and Sera monks - the ones who stabbed my brother - were waiting behind the Yuthok bridge. Though my brother was a brave man and had a pistol in his pocket and he did like this [waved his pistol], his opponents outnumbered him so he was killed there. It all happened on the same day. Similarly, Dingkar [tib. lding dkar] Gandrön and four or five [kudrak](#) were killed on that day.

Q

Were they killed on the same day?

A

Yes, they were killed on the same day. We had a very difficult time then. Our father's Kashag servants and his lay official bodyguard, the [simgag](#) [tib. gzim 'gag] were arrested. All our relatives and friends were frightened and they were unable to bail them out, but at that time, [Gyütö](#) [tib. rgyud stod] monastery was of great help to us. [Gyütö](#) and the monasteries were better, as we were told later. Our mother lived at the monastery, especially at the [Tsangpa](#) [tib. gtsang pa] Khamtsen. They were staying in Tashi Khangsar near the monastery. My brother was a [trüku](#) those days. He was a [trüku](#) of Pompora [tib.

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spom po ra] [khamtsen](#). I remember the [chandzö](#) of our [trüku](#) [brother] was a tall [Khamba](#). He went suddenly to our mother and told her that her husband had been killed. Our mother was intelligent, she asked about her son also. He said even he had been killed. She fell unconscious then. Our mother was 42 and the father was 46. So we had a lot of problems those days. I was very young then. When the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet, he felt sorry about the whole issue as if it were a mistake. Everybody was watching us. We supposed there was opposition from among the four Prime Ministers. This was our suspicion and so we were told by the later's wife [tib. lha lcam].

Q

Do you mean [Shatra](#), Sholkhang and Changkhyim?

A

Yes. McDonald told me, "It was sent from there, it was sent from there. What a tragedy." Then our mother spent her time doing her prayers. Nothing worse could have come on us. Nothing worse could have come on us. Our mother used to be very cheerful before. Our late father was highly thoughtful, expert in painting and playing musical instruments. Likewise our brother was expert at playing the flute and the dulcimer. After the Kashag work, he would play the dulcimer and he spent his time cheerfully. When our brother played the flute, a Tibetan Muslim called "Akbar" used to sit upon the wall of the old Tsarong residence to listen to it and used to praise it and say that he played just like his father. A regular visitor to our brother was Tsipön [Lungshar](#). In those days - Tsipön [Lungshar](#) was a [tsipa](#) [tib. rtsis pa] [secretary] in the Tsikhang.

Q

Wasn't he called Tsipa [Lungshar](#)?

A

Yes. He was called Tsipa [Lungshar](#). Our brother was expert in playing the stringed instrument called "Horching." So they would get together and lived cheerfully. Tsarong was not a high ranking aristocrat [tib. sde dpon che khag]. Our late grandfather, who was a Tsipön, was an exceptional, wonderful man so he was appointed shape. Like [Shatra](#), before he could have the inaugural ceremony and the audience with the Dalai Lama, he

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expired. He was the one who had gone to Nagtshang [tib. nag tshang] to discuss that area. His name was Tsarong Rinzin Dorje [tib. rig 'dzin rdo rje]. He was a Tsipön.

Q

Who was he? Was he your father's brother?

A

He was my grandfather. After the murder of our father, there was no son in the Tsarong family. The only son at Tsarong was a [trüku](#). Pema Drölkar [tib. pad ma sgrol dkar lags] was our eldest sister and there was Norbu Yudron [tib. nor bu g.yu sgron] of Dele Raptan [tib. bde legs rab brtan] and Tseten Drolkar [tib. tshe brtan sgrol dkar] of Horkhang. Tseten Drölkarla was given to Horkhang as a bride at the age of 15 when our father was alive. Tseten Drölkarla was the mother of Tessla. My brother the [trüku](#) was older than me and Jangchula [tib. byang 'chub lags] was younger than me. Two or three children died before Jangchula. The wife of our late elder brother was from the Mirugyaba [tib. mi ru rgyab pa] family. She was their only daughter so she was pampered too much. As gifts, she would get five or six silk Tibetan dresses and then as far as blouses were concerned, she would get not less than six or seven. She also had a pile of brocade triangular patches, [tib. sgrog gdan] for her aprons.

Q

When you say so much, how much would this be in inches?

A

It must have been about six inches thick. She use to be given Tibetan medicine pills that included pulverized precious gems (tib. rinchen rilbu [rin chen ril bu] for rejuvenation. The name of our elder brother's wife was Rinchenla. She was extremely kind to me. She used to advise us on consuming Rinchen Rilbu pills. She used to warn us not to take many of these pills and warned that the daughter of Mirugyaba should not be given such pills, but she consumed many pills which made her suffer from diarrhea and finally she died at the age of 21. So she was killed by too many pills. Hence I am scared to take such pills.

Q

Was it because of an excess of pills?

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A

It must have been. After her death, our late brother took the daughter of Delek Rabten as his wife. Kungnö Dingja Theiji [tib. lding bya tha'i ji] and Tsatrü [tib. tsha sprul] Rinpoche had the same parents. They had only one sister who was called Rinchen Drolma. She was the second wife of my brother, the [gandrön](#). He did not have a child. Now that our father was no more with us, we had the new wife and our Amala with us. It was improper to send back the new wife, since she was the wife of our elder brother. When the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa, he did not come to Lhasa straight away. He lived about a year at Chönkhor Yangtse [tib. chos 'khor yangs rtse].

Q

Why was that?

A

I do not know. But he stayed there. That place was near Lhasa. At that time Tsatrü Rinpoche, who was also known as the Tsawa Khenchen [tib. tsha ba mkhan chen], was a favorite of the Dalai Lama. When the Dalai Lama was in India, he sent Tsatrü Rinpoche to Japan. So he was one of the personal attendants of the Dalai Lama. My brother, the gandrön's wife, used to go to meet Tsatrü Rinpoche. Dasang Dramdül was a favorite of the Dalai Lama and was capable. Hence he was asked to be a bridegroom by many families. But [Tshaw](#) Khenchen somehow convinced him that it would be good if he could be the bridegroom of Tsarong because his younger sister who was the wife of my late brother [gandrön](#) was there.

Q

Was Tsatrü Rinpoche a relative of gandrön's wife?

A

Yes. They were siblings. Tsatrü Rinpoche wrote many letters to our mother. The late [Sawangchemmo](#) once sorted all the letters. At that time I was a small girl. It was in Dasang Dramdül's time that the sorting of the letters was done. So these old letters were found. Tsatrü Rinpoche was a strange person. In all his letters to mother, he addressed her as

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"You are the treasure of wealth." [tib.nor gyi bang mdzod] At that time, Tsarong was not a treasure of wealth. What a strange Lama - so said Dasang DramdÜ.

Q

What did you say he used to address your mother as?

A

"You are the treasure of wealth" - in all his letters. Dasang DramdÜ used to say, "What a strange Lama." He wrote like this in all his letters. Whatever may be, in all his letters he used to tell her to ask Dasang DramdÜ to be our bridegroom. One of the sons of Tsarong was a reincarnated lama and hence we needed an able person to lead the family. Our family consisted of daughters only. It would be nice to have him for Rinzin Drölkarla, the wife of my late brother [gandrön](#). So this was after the murder of our late brother. Then our servants like Tsarong Chandzö and senior servants spoke to our mother, saying that [Sawangchemmo](#) is an outsider and so also is his wife, so there is no Tsarong [kinship] member. Therefore, he must take two wives. We want to request him to take one of our daughters according to his own choice. He may take up Pema Drölkarla or the nun Norbu Yudrönla. At that time Norbu Yudrönla was a nun at Tashi Rabten. He must take up one of them as otherwise it is not acceptable to us. So this request was made to him. He was at that time a [dzasa](#) and later at the age of 24, he became the [magji](#) kalön. This request for a dual wife was made to him, but the mother of Dele Rabten was a scary and aggressive woman and she found it unacceptable and said that "We have to be careful and think this over seriously." I heard that they had been fighting a lot and she was saying, "We should settle the matter internally, without letting the matter get widespread," like the proverb, "We should hold the bell on our stomach without raising the symbol up in the sky" [tib. sil snyan nam mkhar 'char ma dgos par/ dril bu sbo 'og nas grol la]. However, he accepted the views expressed by our mother and Tsarong servants - and agreed to have two wives. So Pema Drölkara became his junior wife while Rinzin Drölkara, the wife of the late brother [gandrön](#), was his senior wife.

Q

You mean the daughter of Horkhang?

A

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No, Pema Drölkar.

Q

Who was Pema Drölkar?

A

Pema Drölkar was the mother of George Tsarong. At Horkhang, Tseten Drölkarla was there. She was the wife of Horkhang [dzasa](#). When our father was alive, she was sent to Horkhang as a bride. During an epidemic in the Earth-Horse Year, her husband died. She was only 19 years of age then.

Now that there were two wives at the Tsarong house. The senior wife gave birth to many children but although three sons were born they did not live. Pema Drölkar gave birth to five children before the birth of Dündüla and Künsangla [tib. kun bzang lags]. However, her elder children did not live. There was another daughter before, Künsangla. I remember it clearly. She fell sick and the younger sister was very worried. She was supposed to have said, "If my daughter gets well I will give away my pearl headdress." When her daughter did not improve at all, she invited Jung [tib. gcung] Rinpoche from Möndröling [tib. smin grol gling]. I remember the whole thing clearly. I was about 6 or 7 that time. It was a big show for me. At Tsarong house, the ritual arrangements were made by the Lamas of Möndröling. They made a [torma](#) religious offering which consists of a small dough house with small staircases and a small bird. It was mainly a ritual to dispel the harm for Künsangla. After the ritual, bird was placed on the foot of the stairs. In this way, the bird was put one step ahead after each ritual. I enjoyed watching this ritual. However, whatever may be, her daughter died in the end.

The bird may have gone up the stairs or not, but the daughter died. It was much later that she gave birth to Künsangla and Dündüla. Before that our mother died in the Earth-Sheep Year. Horkhang Dzasa expired in the Earth-Horse year when an epidemic broke out. He was around or maybe less than 30 years of age. Then [Sawangchemmo](#) used to go to Horkhang to help them and became friendly with our sister who had gone to Horkhang as their bride. From Tsarong house, none of his wives complained of his [sexual] relations with her. They were really nice people, they never said a word. That was when she conceived Penbarla [tib. dpal 'bar lags]. Right after that, Horsur [tib. hor zur] Dzasa filed a lawsuit against Horkhang because they didn't have a son. So [Sawangchemmo](#) also had to help them a lot. At that time, there was also [Horkhang's daughter], the mother of

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Ngabö Ngawang Jigme [tib. ngag dbang 'jigs med] who was called Ane Champala [tib. a ne byams pa lags]. Since my elder sister was young, it was decided that when Ngawang Jigme would be mature, he would get together with my elder sister. Later, when my elder sister gave birth to the son Penbarla and [Sawangchemmo](#) was powerful and famous, so Horsur's lawsuit didn't work out and they just paid some salary to Horsur.

Q

Otherwise, Horsur was saying that Horkhang didn't have a son, right?

A

They were saying that since the [dzasa](#) has died, I am the owner of the Horkhang. At that time, my elder sister was pregnant with her son.

Was he the first child? Horkhang Dzasa had only one child, right?

He had two children. He got a daughter, but she died. They sought divination for the child. It was strange, the divination said that although the child was a son he should be called Sonam Drölma [tib. bsod nams sgrol ma] which was a name given before the birth of the child. [Sawangchemmo](#) dealt with everything in a diplomatic way. Later, when Ngawang Jigme attained maturity, he was asked to be with my elder sister. There after, [Sawangchemmo](#) stopped physical relations with my elder sister. After that, I heard that the Jetsünma [tib. rje btsun pa] [Ngabö's mother] opened a storage room in Gyama [tib. rgya ma] [estate] and took out silks and boxes of tea. Nobody knew of it.

Q

Jetsünma had hidden them somewhere there?

A

Yes, it was said that gold equivalent to the size of a goat's head was also found. I do not know, but gold was found. There used to be a lot of talk like this that I heard where I was a child.

Q

Had Jetsünma hidden it there? She took it from Horkhang and hid it there, did she not?

A

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Sawangchemmo later said that it was no use keeping them hidden. We have to repay loans.

Q

Loans of Horkhang?

A

I suppose there was a loan.

Q

So, [Sawangchemmo](#) reconciled everything?

A

Yes. So, in this way, the years rolled by. My elder sister, being young, gave birth to Tessla, then to Dekyi Drölmala [tib. bde skyid sgrol ma lags], and to Sonam Drölmala [tib. bsod nams sgrol ma lags] and to Daisyla, Thöndup Drolma [tib. don grub sgrol ma]. Phüntso Gyentsenla [tib. phun tshogs rgyal mtshan lags] was their youngest son. So six or seven children were born to her. At that time, [Sawangchemmo](#) was the [magji](#) and he was living in the quarters in the Gusung Regiment. Ngawang Jigme stayed there. At that time, Geshe Sherabla [tib. shes rab lags] was checking the Kangyur text and Ngabö was made to study under Geshela. Now Ngabö had really matured and so Jetsünma said that now her son had grown up so he may be asked to live together with my elder sister. [Sawangchemmo](#) had signed an agreement on this matter and so he said it was true and it will be good if Ngawang Jigme and my elder sister Tsetenla lived together.

However, my elder sister did not agree at all. She said, "Ngawang Jigmela could be my own child. I have many children of [Sawangchemmo](#) and then two children from the late [dzasa](#). I am the mother of children who have different fathers. I do not want to be like this anymore. Ngawang Jigmela should look for a suitable bride from amongst the high ranking noble families, according to the wishes of his mother. I am the mother of so many children and I am also aged. It would be inappropriate to be sent as his bride." She did not agree at all. So this alliance did not take place at all.

Q

Did Jetsünma agree to this?

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A

She agreed and said that he must have a bride of his own liking. "We are all of Horkhang," she said. "Penbarla will be the [dzasa](#) and he, too, will need people in Horkhang. I am an aged lady and can not be the bride of Ngawang Jigmela. So far we have lived like mother and son." So this is what my elder sister did.

Q

Who could say that that was not true?

A

Yes, nobody could deny it. There was an age difference of twelve or thirteen years. Then it was decided to get a bride for him. [Sawangchemmo](#) made plans to send him as a [magpa](#) to Doring [tib. rdo ring], but as a karmic result, the lady Doring Karmala and the late Lhajam [elder sister?] were close relatives so it did not work out. At that time, when he [Ngabö] was in the [Drongdrag](#) [tib. grong drag] Regiment, Ngabö Lhajam was around 21 or 22 years of age. When she married the elder Ngabö who was a shape, she was around 16 or 17 years and the shape was about 50 years of age. So, there was a young beautiful Lhajam.

Yuthok [Sawangchemmo](#) was in the [Drongdrag](#) Regiment then. Ngabö [Lhajam] Tseten Drölkar [tib. tshe brtan sgrol dkar], in a well-dressed manner riding good horses and mules, made frequent visits to Yuthok. Ngabö was in need of a bridegroom. There were many eager to be the bridegroom of Ngabö, and Surkhang Depön was the most important one.

Q

Was that the one nicknamed [dayan] Dayangchin [Surkhang Khenjung]?

A

Dayangchin was a [tsidrung](#). It was Depön Lhawang Topgyal [tib. lha dbang stobs rgyas] la. He was younger than Wangchen Gelek [tib. dbang chen dge legs] la who was the shape. He hailed from a good family. Ngabö Lhajam used to meet Horkhang Ngawang Jigme, who was smart. The servants of Ngabö got together and discussed the bridegrooms because it was a matter of their [lord](#) and they were being careful about it.

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They said that Surkhang's son was more rough while the Horkhang's son had a better temperament. Then [Sawangchemmo](#) taught him a strategy and told him [Ngabö], "Write a letter and then jump."

Q

Send a letter and jump?

A

I seem to have heard it like this. In this way, things went well there. The servants' desires were fulfilled, the Lhajam was pleased and Ngawang Jigme himself was a good boy. Then he went there. This was about my elder sister.

Q

Was Yuthok a relative to Ngabö Lhajam? I mean the Yuthok who was in [Trapchi](#)?

A

Yuthok was her paternal uncle. So she was going to her paternal uncle. Consequently, the Yuthok daughter was given to Surkhang and Yuthok took Surkhang Dorje Yudron [tib. rdo rje g.yu sgron] as his bride. So there were several changes. So Surkhang Lhajam was Yuthok's daughter. Yuthok's daughter was actually to be given to Norgye Nangpa [tib. nor rgyas nang pa] but the proposal was withdrawn and she was given as the bride of Surkhang Depön and [Sawangchemmo](#).

Q

Do you mean she was for both?

A

Yes.

Q

Surkhang Depön was the one who went to America?

A

Yes. So there were a lot of changes.

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Q

Where was Surkhang Lhajam was supposed to go?

A

She was to go to Norgye Nangpa initially.

Q

You mean as the wife of this Nornang Kugnö?

A

Yes, as the wife of Nornang Kugnö. Rinpoche, you asked me to tell you my story but then all these stories came in.

Q

But this is really good. When a family lineage is coming to an end, there is usually an exchange of brides and bridegrooms amongst the families.

A

Yes, that is true. First the relationship has to be established. Dorje Yudrön was not getting a suitable bridegroom and Yuthok was famous those days and so the proposal was arranged.

Q

Was Yuthok then a [depön](#)?

A

Yes, he was the [depön](#) of the [Drongdrag](#) Regiment.

Q

He was the [Drongdrag](#) depön so through Künphela, he came to be close to the 13th Dalai Lama. He became famous also.

A

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The 13th Dalai Lama was fond of Yuthok and Künphela also was fond of him. Surkhang's mother was very fond of her children and so she was making the move to give away her daughter to Yuthok. Yuthok was a great noble family while Norgye Nangpa was just a small [gerpa](#) and so there was no comparison between them. Hence karmic cause and effect was thrown into the water and later Surkhang's daughter was given to Yuthok.

Q

Surkhang was one of the high ranking aristocrats, right?

A

Yes. My parents died when I was young. My mother died when I was 10 years old. She used to go to the hermitage after the death of my father. Since she went to the hermitage she was not able to breast-feed Anela and her breast was no longer producing milk. We were on good terms with Samdrub Phodrang [tib. bsam grub pho brang] so a maid servant used to come from there to breast-feed Anela. They said this maidservant was of good breed and she had given birth to a baby and so she had milk. I remember her name was Acha Lha Drölma [tib. a lcag lha sgrol ma]. So Anela was breast fed by her.

My mother was very religious and I remember she used to take me to the hermitage when I was about 6 or 7 years old. Later she devoted all her life to the dharma. When my mother died, I was just a child. As I told you earlier, my mother went to [Tsang](#) to renovate a monastery there. In Lhasa, the 13th Dalai Lama gave a transmission on Mani, the Avalokitesvara mantra and at that time my mother was given special treatment. He seemed to have understood our situation.

Q

What special treatment was given to her when the teaching on the mantra was being given by the 13th Dalai Lama?

A

The Dalai Lama touched her head with his bare hand while giving the blessing and her mattress seat was also put at the front where the Dalai Lama was. The Dalai Lama placed his hand on her head while blessing her. Such a blessing is not normally done for women. My mother offered her locket and head ornaments. She asked for permission to make a temple, a Mani Lhakhang, and got the permission to do so. In front of the [Norbulinga](#) gate

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there is a Tsarong Mani Lhakhang that she got permission to make. In this way, the Dalai Lama was being very kind to her. Of course, I was just a child, But I heard all about this from my elder sisters. I had been in school then. Around 1927-1928, when Kaldenla [tib. skal ldan lags], and Namdröla [tib. nam grol lags] were the favorites of the Dalai Lama, a bill for the Mani Lhakhang was sent to us. At that time Dasang Dramdül was already at Tsarong. The bill came from the private treasury and so it must have been the order of the Dalai Lama. The locket and the head ornaments did not meet the expenses for the construction of the Lhakhang and an additional four hundred [dotse](#) was demanded. We were surprised. My elder sister paid the amount since it was the ritual for our mother to have a Mani Lhakhang.

Similarly, when she went to [Tsang](#), the previous Panchen Rinpoche was extremely kind to her. She was given the shape's seat. At the time of the Künkhyab Ling [tib. kun khyab gling] opera show, he sent the dronyerchemmo of [Tsang](#) to invite her. On the whole, she was treated very well there. Then she went up to the medicine monastery on the estate and had an audience with the Sakya [tib. sa skya] Lama. It was not the Sakya Dagchen [tib. bdag chen] but it was Jamyang Thupten Sangpo [tib. 'jam dbyangs thub bstan bzang po], a holder of the Sakya lineage. He suggested that since our mother moved from one place to another and to the hermitage, she must have a personal protective dakini [tib. mka' 'gro ma] to protect her and her belongings.

Q

This is how the dakini Hrikyila [tib. hri skuid lags] came to be associated with Amala, right?

A

Yes. Then Amala came back to Lhasa and used to make regular offerings by burning [tsampa](#) [tib. gsur] to Hrikyila. In case the offerings were not made, someone saw the mask of the dakini in the bedroom of Dele Rabten Amala. [unclear?] It was really true. Amala used to wear a sheep-skin dress those days. I was attending school at Lhasa and was 9 years of age. She came to Lhasa and took Anela with her. She made a green satin sheep-skin coat and cap from green satin for Anela and saddled the horse and took him away. [Sawangchemmo](#) and my elder sister were living in Gyatso together and Künsangla was born to them. At Gyatso, there used to be a chimney and at the top of this chimney, Amala had placed her pendant for keeping religious objects. They used to live in an ordinary

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dwelling. There was no dining hall. Gyatso is a village-like house but they lived in good style. It was a flat house. [Sawangchemmo](#) took the pendant and asked, "What is in this pendant?" She told him that this was the pendant for the deity. He took down the pendant and opened it and found a mask with a crooked mouth. When he asked what this was, my elder sister said, "Oh! That is what I dreamed of last night. I was feeding Künsangla but the face of the baby had a crooked mouth."

Q

I was feeding a baby last night in my dream and ...?

A

The baby I was feeding had a crooked mouth. Then he asked, "How did this come about?" Amala said, "When I went to Sakya, Jamyang Thupten Sangpa told me to take it so as to protect me since I go alone to hermitages. Since I was told by the lama, I had to do it. This is how Hrikyila came to us."

Q

What help did Hrikyila give you?

A

I do not know what Hrikyila did, but Amala's was Vajra Yogini and she had a mandala of Vajra Yogini in her room.

Q

Yes, that is true, but what did Hrikyila do?

A

It was said that Hrikyila would prevent robbery. So then Amala fell ill and the servant said there were disturbances like the throwing off of the curtains in Amala's room.

Q

Maybe something went wrong with Hrikyila?

A

I do not know for certain. I have written in my book when the female demon was in the east of the room, my elder sister was alone in the north of the room; she used to sleep with her false hair on. There used to be a small partitioned bedroom with glass within the bedroom. There was a double bed in this small bedroom for [Sawangchemmo](#) and my elder sister. When I think of this place, it was an unhealthy bed. When [Sawangchemmo](#) was not there, my elder sister used to be alone in this bedroom. This bedroom with 4 pillars. It was in the old [Pandatsang](#) [tib. spom mda' tshang] house. My elder sister never told lies and she told me that in this bedroom she had a horrifying dream. Then she woke up and saw the face of a woman near the window glass so she tried to look at it and wondered whether she was dreaming or not. Then she remembered our late Amala's Hrikyila and she got very much frightened. She slept covering up her whole head along with her false hair and she took refuge in the "Three Jewels." After reciting the refuge prayers, she looked again and the face was there. She thought that if she shouted, the devil lady may get annoyed and show a wrathful face. At this point, a domestic fowl crowed behind the guest house. She then remembered that the late Serkong Dorjechang [tib. gser kong rdo rje 'chang], who was our uncle, had said once that when the domestic fowls crow, ghosts do not stay around so she looked around to see if the ghost was still there and it had gone. Amala continued to be ill and rituals were performed for her quick recovery. The doctors said she was having a stomach disease called Singpholang [tib. ?] and so she must use a dung beetle [tib. bse le sbad gog] for her treatment. But she was not at all pleased with his treatment. She felt very sad because she did not want to end the life of two dung beetles just for her own life. The dung beetle was rolled inside butter and was given to her. Anyway, she was unwell for a long time. It was the 8th day of the third month of the Tibetan calendar during the Gyator rite [tib. brgyad gtor] that her brother the [trüku](#) came over to our place. He was a clever man but his [chandzö](#) was not efficient and his [labrang](#) was small. His tutor was a [Khamba](#) and not good at religious instructions. Therefore, [Sawangchemmo](#) was of the opinion that if the [trüku](#) carried on like this, he would not make much progress and so it would be nice to have him back in Tsarong. [Sawangchemmo](#) himself had come to Tsarong as a groom. Trüku could become a monk official. In the past, there was Tsarong Khenpo Kalsang Chödrag [tib. mkhan po skal bzang chos grags], who was a monk official, who became very famous so perhaps the [trüku](#) could also rise to the same level, and so [trüku](#) my brother was called back to Tsarong to be made into a monk official.

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At the Gyetor occasion kugnös had come in the early morning for Gyetor. The 13th Dalai Lama used to perform Gyetor on a grand scale. Amala was slightly better that morning. She had a green dress, a red blouse and pearl head ornaments. I heard from my elder sister that my late mother had a dream when she was in Drepung and a woman wearing a green dress, a red blouse and pearl head ornaments was found dead. Later, when she died, she was dressed exactly like this. At that time, [Sawangchemmo](#) was the shape and when our elder brother had his inauguration audience, there were 4-5-6 servants and there were many riders.

On that day, I was staying downstairs and was playing with dice with the students. We were saying that we would play dice and Tsarong and my mother were on the top floor. At that time, the maidservants were in a hurry going up and down carrying a bowl of burning incense. When I went upstairs, I found that my mother was staying in the eastern room. She faced the south and was making a panting sound like "sor sor". Then our maternal aunt of [Ramba](#) Khangsar who was the grandmother of Söpela [tib. bsod dpal lags] came. When my elder brother came back from the audience, probably, he didn't have the merit and there was no scarf presentation to him for having been made a government official, but it was a mourning period. Perhaps he was not lucky in that way. People had come for scarf presentations to our [trüku](#) brother, but it did not take place. Then astrological calculations were done and it was said, as I heard later, that the ghost had been placed on the seat of a god. Amala's deity was Vajra Yogini, but the demon lady was placed below. It was never kept in the altar, but she used to make the Sur offering. It was said later that she died because of this. This was what I heard as a child. Since Amala's body had been taken away, her living room looked empty. The monk came every week to perform rituals for the deceased. I remember I used to take the students with me and shout, "Hrikyi, the female demon, come out. You harmed my Amala." I was not scared of cursing the female demon. A child has to be naughty, I suppose. Anyway, the demon was never seen after that. There was a Sakya Lama called Drupthob [tib. grub thob] and he was a jolly guy. [Sawangchemmo](#) once told him to take away that mask and Drupthob did that. After the death of Amala, Hrikyila stopped being a horror. They said that she had gone back.

Q

It could be. Perhaps she had the order to be with Amala until Amala died. When Amala died, she must have gone back.

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A

Maybe. I and my elder sister were attending school. I was 9 years old when I was sent to the Kyire [tib. skyid ras] School. Drönyerchemmo Phala, Surkhang Wangchen Gelek, Surkhang Depön Lhathobla and Phala Phogpön were with us.

In 1922, Sir Charles Bell, the Sikkim Political Officer, came to Tibet. As school children we were excited to see him. We heard there was a strange person with a red nose and a flower pot on his head adorned with a Chinese [hat](#) and feathers. We wanted to see him. One time, he was riding on a horse and going behind [Gyambumgang](#) [tib. rgya 'bum sgang]. His face looked very red.

Then one day, I heard that he was coming to the Tsarong House. At Tsarong, they were busy making tea and food for his visit. Sir Charles Bell was not keeping well those days and he had undergone appendicitis surgery, so he was taking food only prepared by his own cook. Later a cook came to Tsarong. Mr. McDonald was also there with Sir Charles Bell. McDonald was not pure English, his mother was a Lepcha and his father was Scottish.

Q

McDonald?

A

McDonald. In all the Tibetan letters, he is addressed as McDol Sahib. Even in all the letters of the 13th Dalai Lama and the government they addressed him as "McDolnal Sahib" [tib. meg sgrol nel sa heb].

Q

Perhaps it was difficult to write McDonald in Tibetan.

A

The Tibetan spelling is [tib. meg sgrol nel] His real name is McDonald. He had nine or ten children.

Q

Nine or ten?

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A

Yes. Three sons and five daughters. Only three are living, the rest died. Annie and Brar of the Himalayan Hotel. Then they were talking. The interpreter was Babu Norbu known as Rai Sahib. McDonald was Trade Mission while Charles Bell was the Sikkim Political Officer. Then there was a doctor, Dr. Kennedy, who also came along with them. Anyway, all their friends and relatives came along to Tsarong House. To have an easy access to the Palace and to enable them to have an audience with the Dalai Lama, they stayed at the Kündeling Guest House, Dekyi Lingka. McDonald came down to play shuttle-cock with us (tib. thebe [the pad]). The others were in the living room. Then McDonald said, "I have daughters. You both should join the English school in Darjeeling. It is a nice place." Anila did not pay much attention to what he said, but I showed my eagerness and asked him if I could come. What we talked about while playing with him, he reported to [Sawangchemmo](#) and my elder sister.

Q

Did McDonald report to [Sawangchemmo](#)?

A

Yes, McDonald spoke to [Sawangchemmo](#) and told him to send both of us, if possible, and that it would be very good for him. He further said, "They could be sent to school along with my daughters." I was going to school those days and was about 9 or 10 years old. Then [Sawangchemmo](#), the father of Daisyla, asked me If I would like to go. Then he asked Jangchupla also but she declined to go. I agreed to go and so they decided to send me to Darjeeling.

Q

Was it immediately?

A

It was decided during Autumn to send me in September. McDonald Sahib was to take me first to [Tromo](#). During the winter holiday, I was to stay at [Tromo](#) with his children and in March, I was to go to Queens Hill Girls High School in Darjeeling along with his daughters. This school was later called Mount Hermon School. So at that time, McDonald Sahib

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taught me the name of the school and told me that if I agreed to go to Darjeeling, then this would be the school I would be going to. I got excited to go. The next day I went to school in Lhasa where I met Kungö Liushar. He was six or seven years older than me. He was quite tall and he was our prefect. Surkhang [Sawangchemmo](#) was also there. I told them all at once that I was going to India to attend Queens Hill Girls High School in Darjeeling. My departure time was getting closer. I said goodbye to my school. I said, "I shall not go unless I bid farewell to my school." So I served a "farewell tea" (tib. [thönja](#) [thon ja]).

Q

What is [thönja](#)?

A

It meant I was now leaving the school. It was customary to offer tea and presents to the teachers, etc. Even before I attended the school, I was more like a boy. At that time, Lhajam Pema Drökarla, the mother of Dündüla, was in charge of the household. Since many children had died, according to the divination done by the Dalai Lama, she was told that she should stay at the hermitage on the top of the Gephel [tib. dge 'phel] Mountain. Then Dündüla and two of the children were born. Then a request was made as to what their birth god should be and it was said that their birth god was Gompo [tib. mgon po] of [Norbulinga](#). At the time when [Sawangchemmo](#) was a favorite, during the bathing picnic, he was invited like a [rinpoche](#) wearing a red silk trousers slightly padded with cotton. He used to fly kites along with the Dalai Lama. Dündüla was about four or five then. When there was the opera show called Murupösang [tib. rme ru spos bzang] in [Norbulinga](#), there used to be chairs in Tsarong's tent. There were no mattresses like the other tents. At that time, he was so powerful. The stable boys [tib. chibs g.yog] of [Norbulinga](#) would come to deliver snacks to Tsarong.

Q

Did [Sawangchemmo](#) stay in the Tsarong tent?

A

Sawangchemmo would not stay there. Normally, the shape staying in [Norbulinga](#) had a tent while there was another tent just below the shape's tent even when Tsarong was not staying there. He used to take out the horses from the stable when my elder sister had

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to go somewhere. He was such a favorite of the Dalai Lama and was so powerful. There was a red horse called Kalsang Kyangpo [tib. skal bzang rkyang po], a very diligent horse. I was more like a boy. I had a copper colored chuba. My elder sister did not make a cap for me so I used to wear our servant Tashi Phüntso's [hat](#) and went to the picnic. He used to leave his [hat](#) with the caretaker Geshe Gendünla [tib. dge 'dun lags] of the Lhamogang [tib. lha mo sgang].

Q

Who was Tashi Phüntso?

A

He was one of the servants at Tsarong. He was not very good. He used to taunt me a lot. So I went to Geshe Gendünla and asked him to give me Tashi Phüntso's [tib. bkra shis phun tshogs] cap as I had to go to the picnic. I said, "I will not put on the Chinese cap (tib. mogril [rmog ril])."

Q

So the daughters wore mogril?

A

Yes, blue mogril. Even boys used mogril with three brocade lines and corals and a golden badge on it. Then I went to the Doring marriage. I did not play with kids and used to stay near the senior Lajam. Then they made a white raw silk chuba and leather shoes for me before I went to school. My late sister was very loving to me and used to do anything for me saying that I was the sister of the late gandrön- brother.

Then I bid farewell to my school at Lhasa and was preparing to leave for Queen's Hill Girls High School. I used to read the English letters on the biscuit tins. When the time to depart came, I felt hesitant to leave on the actual day of the departure. Then I said, "If they give me the small tan colored horse to ride with the silver saddle then I shall go, but I shall not go if I am given a mule to ride." Of course, they fulfilled all my wishes and made the chupas and put them in a trunk. I left along with the [nyerpa](#) Wangyal [tib. dbang rgyal] and the maid servant, Drölma Kyizom [tib. sgrol ma skyid 'dzoms]. There were gifts to be given to McDonald Sahib. I left with my hair braided.

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Q

What dress did you put on?

A

I was wearing a brown satin dress called tselchuma [tib. tshal phyu ma] and velvet boots. Actually they had made all that I asked for - even Tibetan men's trousers. Anyway, I cried a lot at the time of leaving and said that I would not take Drölma Kyizom. They agreed to this, but they sent her along with the [nyerpa](#). She was a wife of nyerpala. I said that I needed some fish sweets and bottles [fruit juice]. When I arrived in Gyantse I stayed a while at the Mesong Estate which belonged to [Loseling](#) [tib. blo gsal gling]. It was July or August. I had sweets and two bottles of fruit juice which I thought I would drink in India.

When I was at Gyantse Sabgang, I thought I had arrived in India. My imagination had already reached India and I had red and green fish sweets. I told Nyerpala and Drölma Kyizom to cut my hair shorter but they would not do it. We continued on and then at Kala Pagthang, we saw someone approaching us wearing a red garment. It was Pasangla [tib. pa sangs lags], a servant of the Trade Representative. Then he talked to Nyerpala and said that McDonald Sahib was at the hot springs (tib. Kambu Chutsen [kham bu [chu](#) tshan]) and he sent him to invite us to Phari. From there he was going to bring us down. I was thrilled. In Phari I saw wild asses and I rode my horse and followed the wild asses. When I came from Lhasa, I didn't dismount my horse on the Nyabso [tib. nya srab] pass and Nyerpala carried me on his back. Then I was at Phari Gabshi, a protege of Tsarong. They were all very good to me. McDonald Sahib came the next day. At the Dak Bungalow, they had put up an English flag and were blowing the bugles.

Q

Were they playing "Long Live the Queen?"

A

Yes. Then I was taken to McDonald. I presented him a scarf and he took me to his house. His daughters were tall, fair, white and beautiful. One of them was Debbie. They were wearing navy blue overcoats. Then there was a very tall son called John Sahib. We talked and he gave me biscuits. I realized that these biscuits were not good and that the biscuits

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at Tsarong were better. They said they would call me the next day and we would leave together at 8 o'clock for [Tromo](#). So I went to McDonald's place. They played the bugles.

Mr. John Sahib was a very tall man. He and his servant rode off for hunting. We rode down slowly. Then we reached Sharsingma and had our lunch at Gawutsal [tib. sga'u tshal]. There were meat and potatoes.

Q

Did you not find it strange, this food being different from your food at Tsarong?

A

I did not find it different, but I felt something was missing. Then, John came. He had shot a huge bear which was being carried by two people. He took a snapshot and again rode away.

Before sunset, we arrived at [Tromo](#). McDonald Sahib's wife was a Nepalese and was wearing a Nepalese dress made from brocade with maroon flower buds [tib. the'u rgya smug]. She was a very pleasant looking lady wearing bracelets. His elder daughter Annie was also there. She was not as white as the others, but pretty wearing a sweater with a beautiful shirt. We arrived at [Tromo](#). [Tromo](#) is very beautiful place. The English are very expert at selecting good places for their houses. The Trade Representative's house was located at the [area of the] [Tromo](#) Governor's House [tib. gro spyi khang] which was on a hill. A river ran through the valley. On the north side of the hill was a single story house, the door facing the west. On the opposite side, across the river, there were military camps, hospitals and the post office. We arrived at [Tromo](#) at the end of August. The flag was hoisted at the Trade Representative's house. McDonald Sahib went inside the house. Then, as I told you earlier, McDonald's wife was wearing a Nepalese dress which was made of maroon satin, not the brocade one as I said above. On top of this she had a shawl. Mr. and Mrs. McDonald were really fine people. He was the British Trade Representative and besides they were like Christian missionaries. They were both very religious. His wife spoke only in Nepalese, even with her children. She understood English but would not speak in it. Anyway, his wife looked highly dignified and everybody had great respect for her. Then the Tsarong servants, like Nyerpala and Drölma Kyizom, returned to Lhasa.

Q

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Where did they go?

A

They went back to Tibet. I had two boxes and blankets - which they handed over to McDonald Sahib.

Q

Didn't they have to see you off until India?

A

No, not to India. They had to accompany me until [Tromo](#). Then they returned to Tibet. McDonald Sahib spoke Tibetan like a Tibetan. He was really like a professor. He knew Chinese, Hindi, Bengali and all total, he said, he knew eleven languages. He was a wonderful man. I was very lucky to be with them and he has influenced me so much. His elder daughter Annie was also very kind to Tessla and when she had problems in the palace, she could come to Annie like her own home. Vera and Vicky were McDonald's younger daughters and they were unmarried those days. I shared a bedroom with Vera. They put a bed in Vera's bedroom and so we slept in one room. Vicky was excellent in English and was studying to be a doctor. She was not very interested in medicine and so she gave it up later. She was a very nice daughter. John was his eldest son. He was very fond of riding horses and going hunting. Then there was another daughter, called Pauline. She was my age. His son, David, had gone to school. There were two younger daughters; one was about 4 and the other was 5 years old. They were still living in England. Their names were Israel and Beting. Before going to the school, they taught me the English customs of dining, etc. There were separate rooms like the drawing room, the kitchen and other nice things that the Trade Representatives had. The cook was excellent and their servants were all Tibetans. They had lots of love for me, being their countryman. Coming from a noble family, I was held in great respect wherever I went. The village heads came to see me with scarves and tea. For breakfast, they gave [tsampa](#) mixed in milk. The cook made bread. The lunch was not very elaborate but was very tasty. Rice curry was also served sometimes. For evening tea, they served delicious cakes. Our dinners used to be simple. I was told to have a bath but I hesitated to take it. There was an old [Khamba](#) lady and she used to try to persuade me to take a bath. Anyway, I resisted for a whole week. In

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the toilets there were no flushers, but there was a box which Indian sweepers would empty out. The old Indian sweepers would take the box out from the toilet to be cleaned.

Q

The Tibetans would not do that?

A

The Tibetans were not doing it. They had brought sweepers from India. Everybody was so nice to me. Bed tea would be placed just in front of my bed and then Vera would call me, "Drölma," early in the morning. The tea cups were very beautiful. The cups were smooth, delicate, with a blue lining and the emblem of the Trade Representative. I liked those cups very much. The servants would place the bed tea and would bow down in respect. They were doing a lot for me, saying that I was from a Lhasa noble family. After a week or so, I had a bath and later Annie started teaching me English. They had a missionary school in [Tromo](#) and Vicky and Vera were teaching there.

Then they took me to this school. I had my hair plaited and one turquoise on each of my ears. Annie said that it would be good to cut off my hair when I went to school so then she cut my hair. I had been there for over four months. I attended the [Tromo] school and learned to speak Nepalese. I also learned to speak a little English. Their children had come for the holidays and so we played together. Pauline and I used to ride military horses. We asked the army to give us horses and we rode off. Pauline's horse went wild and she was thrown off. I just managed to escape. We were young and were riding on military horses so we lost control and got into trouble. Saturdays we would go into the forest taking meat, rice and potatoes. There were many Nepalese and [Tromo](#) children who were Christians. They would also come with us. There were three or four Nepalese teachers also. Then Christmas and New Year came. I remember I cried a bit on New Year's day. I missed my home then. They brought Tibetan biscuits for me. Many people of [Tromo](#) came to me, so at the New Year I missed my home very much.

Q

Of course, New Year's in Lhasa was done on a grand scale?

A

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Yes, of course. I was happy at [Tromo](#). Then Annie measured my dress and placed an order to Whites of Kolcutta. It was a supermarket type of store from which one could buy many things. One could select from a catalogue and ask them to send it by V.P.P. My dresses arrived. So later when I went to school I knew a little English. Joe was another son of McDonald. Joe is still living, but he has gone crazy. Joe is a friend of Jotalk [?]. So Joe came to [Tromo](#). He was tall. He was not attending Queens Hill Girls High School but was going to Goethals School in Kurseong. Then we hired horses and rode down to Kalimpong.

Did you go on horses?

Yes, we hired horses. Of course, the expenses were met by Tsarong House. Anyway, they were very kind and loving to me. I was just like their own kid. Annie was specially good to me. She taught me sewing and how to handle needles. We made fire at the Dak Bungalows which we came to on our way. At one time, we burned a bellows.

Q

Maybe, you did not know to make fire?

A

The fire got into the bellows. We were all very friendly. We arrived in Kalimpong and then went to Darjeeling. There was no electricity in Kalimpong, they used lamps. There was also no electricity in [Tromo](#). In [Tromo](#), they used kerosene lamps, not pressure lamps. Then we arrived in Darjeeling. There were no vehicles going between Darjeeling and Kalimpong in those days so we had to go on horses. In Darjeeling, there was electricity. Kalimpong was a nice place, plenty of water but no electricity.

Q

So you came down to Kalimpong via Gangtok?

A

Not through Gangtok. Annie took us across the Dzelebla Pass [tib. rdza leb la] so then we arrived in Rungpung. Then we stayed at Rungpung, Kathanchan, Rongling and we arrived in Kalimpong from the side of Alupara and Rongling. Dzalebla is almost 14,000 ft and it was the same height as Natöla [tib. sna stod la] but the road was worse and we had to cross the Lungtong [tib. lung stong] la Pass and reach Nagthang [tib. nag thang]. I felt very

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happy while going down from the Dzalebla. I saw flocks of sheep and then on the way, there were several small Indian shops that had very small kerosene lanterns with glasses that were just a little bit bigger than an egg to sell.

Q

Could the lanterns be lit?

A

Yes, they were good. Then I arrived in Darjeeling and went to school with Pauline and David. David died long ago and Pauline died a year or so ago. Since I did not know the English language, the teachers were good to me, but I did not understand the class lessons. First, I was sent to the kindergarten class for only a month. Then I was put into Class I. I had problems only in the first year of my school. In the second year, I could talk and understand. In all, I spent only four years in the school. In the first year, I was in kindergarten, and in the second year in Class-II and then in the third year I got promoted to Class IV. Then I went to Lhasa during the winter as they had invited me to Lhasa.

Q

Why did they call you to Lhasa?

A

To meet my relatives. At that time, [Sawangchemmo](#) and my elder sister were in Gyatso and I heard that the 13th Dalai Lama made inquiries about me saying that I had come from Lhasa and may have brought some new mationary [???]. Of course, I did not have any such thing. [Sawangchemmo](#) told me that I must go for an audience with the Dalai Lama. I remember that I put on nice Kalimpong boots and a silk dress and the school cap. Then my elder sister gave me a fifty [sang](#) note (in Tibetan currency) and a scarf to be presented to the Dalai Lama. Then Kujar had come to invite us. It was the personal attendant, Kujar [tib. sku bcar] Künphela. Künphela had not become a Kujar that time. He became Kujar later. So he came to invite us from Gyatso. Then [Sawangchemmo](#) took me along with him to the Jensal Phodrang palace. After climbing a staircase, we were in the Dalai Lama's living room. [Sawangchemmo](#) told me to stay behind and he went in. Then an attendant came to call me in. [Sawangchemmo](#) was guiding me and told me to make prostrations and

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to present the scarf and the envelope with the 50 [sang](#) notes. Then the Dalai Lama told me, "Sit down." He asked me which school I went to. I told him the name of my school.

He then asked me if my school was somewhere near to St. Joseph's. Then he asked me my age and I told him that I was about 12 years old. He also asked me the size of the school and I told him that we had about 300 children in the school. Then he asked me when was I going back to school. Then the Dalai Lama gave me a present and as I was about to take my leave, he asked me what I had on my hair. I told him that we tied up our hair in the school so that it did not come over the face. Then I went to Lhasa and at the Tsarong house they had made a bed for me. My relatives invited me to their places. I was in Lhasa in the year when the Drepung monks mobbed [Norbulinga](#).